

AMEND THE CLAIMS:

1. through 21. (Canceled)

22. (Allowed) A reciprocating foot pedal exerciser for realistic, normal walking, jogging, running and stepping in place enabling automatically variable length strides, comprising:

a pair of foot pedals for receiving user foot action at a substantially constant forward step-down position on the exerciser;

support means for guiding said foot pedals in primarily back and forth strokes variable rearwardly from said forward step-down position and

means for returning said foot pedals to said forward step-down position at the end of each stride independently of stride length;

said means for returning applying a return force to a foot pedal only during each said foot pedal's return stroke.

23. (Currently amended) The exerciser of claim 22 wherein said means for returning returns ~~[[the]]~~ a rearmost one of said foot pedals to said forward step down position using step-down energy.

24. (Currently amended) The exerciser of claim 22 having arresting means to stop returning said foot pedals at said forward step-down position, energy conversion means and energy storage means to recuperate energy of returning said foot pedals and means to apply said energy to said means for returning.

25. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 22 further including power and control means connecting the downward force and deflection of a forward one of said pedals to the rearward one of said pedals to propel said rearward pedal forward.

26. (Allowed) The exerciser in accordance with claim 22 wherein said means for returning includes fluid means.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 22 further including speed regulating means to control rearward motion of said foot pedals.

29. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 28 wherein said regulating means comprises spring and damper means.

30. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 28 wherein said regulating means comprises rotary resistance means.

31. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 22 further including motorized speed regulating means to control rearward motion of said foot pedals.

32. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 31 wherein said regulating means comprises frictional drive means interconnecting said motorized means and said foot pedals.

33. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 31 wherein said regulating means comprises fluid pumping means interconnecting said motorized means and said foot pedals.

34. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 31 further comprising:

sensor means to sense the user's foot force rearward or forward on said foot pedal and;

control means to receive a signal from said sensor means and to vary the speed of said motorized means in response to said foot force.

35. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 22 further including foot pedal braking means to brake forward motion of said foot pedal when said user is standing on said foot pedal.

36. (Allowed) The exerciser according to claim 23 further including cushion means integral with said return means to cushion the user's step-down on said foot pedal.

37. (Canceled)

38. (Allowed) The exerciser of claim 22 wherein said means for returning employs energy sources external to a user.

39. (Currently amended) The exerciser of claim 38 wherein said external energy sources include fluid power means. [[5]]

40. (Allowed) The exerciser of claim 22 wherein said means for returning employs stored energy from a plurality of sources.

41. (Currently amended) A reciprocating foot pedal exerciser for walking, jogging, running and stepping in place enabling automatically variable length strides, comprising:

foot pedals for receiving user foot action at a forward step-down position;

support means for guiding said foot pedals in primarily back and forth strokes variable rearward from said step-down position and

means for returning said foot pedals to said forward step-down position at the end of each stride at velocities substantially greater than stride velocity:

said means for returning applying a return force to a foot pedal only during each said pedal's return stroke.